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Did business loss drive them to murder? Dey brothers took Rs 15 crore loan, left with just Rs 25,000- 40,000

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KOLKATA: Barely a few thousand rupees-something between Rs 25,000 and Rs 40,000-remain in the bank accounts of the Dey brothers.

Faced by huge losses in their family business, Pranay and Prasun Dey planned a suicide pact for the entire family, apparently to end their sufferings.

The macabre unravelling of events started early on Feb 19, when Prasun, Pranay and Pranay's son, Pratip, were found critically injured in a car accident on E M Bypass. The three were taken to hospital and after speaking to Prasun, police visited the Dey residence a few hours later to find the bodies of the brothers' wives and Prasun's teenaged girl, Priyamvada.

The accident was apparently a deliberate act, a suicidal move by the brothers but all of them survived. Ever since, as police have been trying to piece together the jigsaw puzzle, the teenaged boy, Pratip, said his mother and aunt were killed and that his cousin had died by having a sedative-laced payesh that the entire family had eaten. Prasun later told police he had slit the wrists of his wife, Romi, and sister-in-law, Sudeshna.

A look into their finances revealed that the Deys had borrowed Rs 15 crore from over six banks and financial institutions, and another Rs 4 crore from individual creditors.

They had mortgaged their Tangra house and factory, and had failed to sell a property in Bolpur. It has now emerged that Prasun had pawned the jewellery left with the family in Jan to raise Rs 19 lakh, which was used to pay the workers at their factory. The Deys owned a second property, which had also been mortgaged, said police.

The Dey brothers had withdrawn their trade licence from KMC last year and also shut their silk export business in Bolpur. The financial trouble had accelerated since Dec 2023, coinciding with the fall in exports across Europe and the exit of a couple of their long-time vendors and partners.

But despite the losses, the Deys had reportedly not cut down on their expenses even when several of the 74 workers on their payroll had their dues held up.

During interrogation, Prasun told police that after slashing the wrists of the two women, he was about to kill Pratip, but the boy's father, Pranay was present in the room. Unable to bear his son's pain, Pranay reportedly requested Prasun not to go ahead with the murder plan and that's how, Pratip was spared at that moment.

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